

303
DEPARTMENT OF STATE MICROFILM

WL NORTON JC 4/29/82

September 7, 1977

Dear Mr. Bloom of 32 Gramercy Park South:

Your letter has been here on my desk all day and from time to time I reread it. It makes me remember what one of the leaders of the civil rights movement in the South said when the black people of that region were struggling for the right to vote as United States citizens. He was asked why black people didn't stop complaining and start working on their own behalf, make their own money and get their own influence. He replied that it was very hard to pull yourself up by the boot straps when someone was standing on your head. And what that means in the context of your views about the worlds' poor is simply that many people, thousands, millions of people, don't have a way to help themselves without some assistance from those who do. I presume that your ancestors like mine and millions of other Americans came to this country because there was opportunity here and no opportunity in the places they were. There are many parts of the world where there is not opportunity for people.

As for the 101 Haitians, 97 have gone back to Haiti, four remain in Guantanamo for future processing.

You say "it really isn't our problem". Whose problem is it, Mr. Bloom?

The world today has grown very small. Even if we conceded that in our past there was no reason to help those in need, we could no longer operate on that premise. The lives of Americans are so intertwined with the lives of peoples everywhere that it

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is in our own interest to help people become stable, productive, healthy and educated. But I believe that there is something unique about the human spirit, that we are obliged by the brotherhood of man to work for a world where people have enough to eat, decent housing and medical care and education for their children. We have a lot left to do here at home but we are rich and powerful and we can hold out a helping hand to people in other places. This country was strengthened by its immigrants. As soon as we stop believing in our own ideals, we'll stop being a great nation.

Maybe you were looking at your income tax stubs or contemplating the condition of your city or looking at the statistics of unemployment and just thought 'what the hell, we've got enough problems.' Well, everybody feels like that sometime. The fact is we are good people and sometimes we feel that we've done enough. But most of the time we know that we can't stop and we don't want to stop. So I hope my letter reaches you on an up-day, when you're feeling comfortable with your own accomplishments and generous toward others.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Derian
Assistant Secretary for
Human Rights and
Humanitarian Affairs